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TWO REPORTS

FROM THE

COMMITTEE

OF THE

HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF JAMAICA,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

SLAVE - TRADE.

[Price 1s.]

1789



TWO REPORTS

(One presented the 16th of *October*, the other on the 12th of *November*, 1788)

FROM THE

C O M M I T T E E

OF THE

HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF JAMAICA,

APPOINTED

To examine into, and report to the House, the Allegations and Charges contained in the several Petitions which have been presented to the BRITISH HOUSE of COMMONS, on the Subject of the SLAVE-TRADE, and the Treatment of the NEGROES, &c. &c. &c.

Published, by Order of the House of Assembly,

BY

S T E P H E N F U L L E R, E S Q;

AGENT FOR JAMAICA.

L O N D O N:

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AND J. DEBRETT, AND J. STOCKDALE, PICCADILLY.

M.DCC.LXXXIX.



FIRST REPORT:

Presented the 16th Day of October, 1788.

MR. SPEAKER,

YOUR Committee appointed to examine into, and report to the House, the various allegations and charges which, by the letters of our Agent, and the Minutes of the House of Commons of Great-Britain, appear to be contained in a great number of petitions presented to that Honourable House, on the subject of the Slave-Trade, and the treatment of the Negroes in this, and the rest of His Majesty's sugar colonies; to report the proceedings and resolutions of the British Parliament thereon; and further to consider whether it may be proper for the House to adopt any, and what, measures on this important occasion, and to report their opinion thereon to the House, do report as follows:—

THAT it appears to the Committee, from the Minutes of the British House of Commons, that petitions have been presented from different corporations, and respectable bodies of men in Great-Britain, praying the interposition of Parliament in abolishing the Slave-Trade; wherein many of the said petitioners, not content with stating various abuses in the transportation of negroes from Africa, have ventured to bring forward many general, unqualified allegations, in respect of the condition

dition and treatment of the slaves employed in the cultivation of this, and others of His Majesty's colonies in the West-Indies; charging, that the people so employed are either exposed to the arbitrary will of avaricious and unfeeling taskmasters, without any protection, or means of redress, even in cases of the most atrocious injury; or placed under the dominion of a most merciless and tyrannical system of laws; that these laws are executed with rigour and brutality; that our slaves are destroyed in a few years, by long and painful labour, and a want of the common necessaries of life; and that the result of such treatment is, that our slaves decrease, instead of increasing, in a climate perfectly congenial to their own.

AND it further appears to the Committee, that, in consequence of such petitions, the House of Commons did, on the 9th of May last, come to the following resolution:—*That this House will, early in the next session of Parliament, proceed to take into consideration the circumstances of the Slave-Trade, complained of in the petitions now lying upon the table, and what may be fit to be done thereon:*—and that a bill was brought in, for providing certain temporary regulations, respecting the transportation of slaves in British bottoms from the coast of Africa; which bill has since passed into a law.

THE Committee are of opinion, that the principle of the said act of the British Parliament is founded in justice, humanity, and necessity; and that the provisions adopted therein, when further matured by the wisdom of Parliament, must ultimately prove highly beneficial to the sugar colonies, inasmuch as it is notorious, that vessels have been frequently crowded with a greater number of negroes than they ought in prudence to have contained. And it is the opinion of the Committee, that the wisdom and authority of Parliament might be beneficially exerted, in further regulations of the African commerce; particularly, in preventing the detention of ships on the coast; in prohibiting the purchase of slaves who shall appear to have been kidnapped, or deprived of liberty contrary to the usage and custom of Africa; and in compelling the said ships to transport an equal number of both sexes, and to provide ventilators, and a sufficient quantity of provisions, especially water.—It seems not to be understood in Great-Britain, that the inhabitants of the West-India islands have no concern in the ships trading to Africa:—The African trade is purely a British trade,

trade, carried on by British subjects, residing in Great-Britain, on capitals of their own;—the connexion and intercourse between the planters of this island, and the merchants of Great-Britain trading to Africa, extend no further than the mere purchase of what British acts of Parliament have declared to be legal objects of purchase.

THE Committee are further of opinion, that as to the charges and allegations brought against us, with regard to the treatment and situation of slaves in this island, it is necessary, and easy, to disprove the same, by demonstrating, 1st, that negroes in this island are under the protection of lenient and salutary laws, suited to their situation and circumstances;—2dly, that the slave-laws are executed with humanity, mildness, and mercy;—3dly, that the laws have made provisions, to grant slaves days of rest, and to prevent their being in want of the necessaries of life;—and, 4thly, that the decrease of our slaves does not arise from the causes alledged in the petitions presented to the British House of Commons, but from various other causes not imputable to us, and which the people in Great-Britain do not seem to comprehend.

AND the Committee are of opinion, that to disprove the said charges and allegations, it is proper to recommend to the House, to grant to the Committee power to send for persons, papers, and records, and to examine all persons that shall come before them, in the most solemn manner.

ORDERED, *That the said Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records, and to examine all persons that shall come before them in the most solemn manner.*

S E C O N D R E P O R T :

Presented the 12th Day of November, 1788.

MR. SPEAKER,

YOUR Committee appointed to examine into, and report to the House, the various allegations and charges which, by the letters of our Agent, and the Minutes of the House of Commons of Great-Britain, appear to be contained in a great number of petitions presented to that Honourable House, on the subject of the Slave-Trade, and the treatment of the negroes in this, and the rest of His Majesty's sugar colonies : and for other purposes ;—have, in pursuance of the powers granted them by the House on their first report, proceeded to collect evidence to disprove the said charges and allegations, by demonstrating ;—1st, *That negroes in this island are under the protection of lenient and salutary laws, suited to their situation and circumstances.*—

ON this subject we have to observe, that it appears by the letters of our Agent, that certain heads of enquiry were transmitted to him a few months ago, from a Committee of the Lords of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, many of which related to the condition and government of our slaves ; and, in answer thereto, an abstract of most of our ancient slave-laws were laid before their Lordships ; to which, if necessary, reference may be had ; * but it seems
not

* MR. FULLER can attribute the above remark to nothing, but his not having been sufficiently explicit in communicating to the Committee of Correspondence all the circumstances

not to have been understood by our Agent, that in 1781, many of those laws were repealed, and all the subsisting laws and clauses of laws respecting the order and government of slaves were consolidated and brought into one act:—This act is known by the name of The Consolidated Slave Act; and, having expired on the 31st day of December 1784, has since been renewed, with amendments. By the said act of 1781, Clauses 2d and 3d, all possessors of plantations are obliged, under the penalty of £. 50. to allot provision grounds for each of their slaves, to allow them sufficient time to work the same, and also to keep in proper cultivation one acre of land at least for every four negroes in plantain-walk and ground-provisions, exclusive of the negroes grounds; and in case the owners or possessors have not lands proper for that purpose, they are required to make some other ample provision for the support of their slaves.

By Clause 4th it is enacted, that every master, owner, or possessor of slaves shall, under the same penalty, provide and give to each slave proper and sufficient cloathing, to be approved of by the justices and vestry of the parish.

By Clause 5th, slaves giving information of thefts or other crimes and misdemeanors are entitled to pecuniary rewards; which is one proof, among others, that our laws consider slaves as capable of holding property, and will protect them therein.

By Clause 6th, the penalty of £. 100. is laid on any master or owner who shall mutilate or dismember any slave or slaves.

By Clause 7th it is enacted, that in case any person shall mutilate any slave the property of another, such further punishment should be inflicted, exclusive of the aforesaid fine, as the Court should think proper; and at same time the owner of the injured slave is allowed to pursue his remedy for damages at common law.

stances of every step he had taken in relation to the Petitions presented to the House of Commons for the abolition of the Slave-Trade; as it appears by the Extract of the Laws of Jamaica, from the year 1686 to the year 1784, which he made with no small degree of labour and pains, and which he laid before the Lords of the Committee last year, there are not less than forty references to the first Consolidated Act of 1781, stating the several alterations of the Laws respecting the Government of the slaves, down to the year 1784, when that Act expired, and when the foundation was laid for the second and third Consolidated Acts, the last of which is to continue in force till the 1st of December 1791.

By

By Clause 8th, any person wantonly beating a slave, not his own property, is liable to be indicted for the same, and punished by fine and imprisonment.

By Clause 28th, further security was given to slaves by altering the mode of trial of such as stood charged with capital offences; for, by former laws, such trials were directed to be held before two justices and three freeholders indiscriminately chosen, whereas by the said act of 1781 it was enacted, that the freeholders on such trials should be chosen by ballot, and out of a number not less than five.

WHEN we reflect that many of these clauses were provisions of our ancient laws; and, in particular, that the penalty on the master who should mutilate or dismember his slave, was enacted so long ago as the year 1717; and when we consider further, that the said act of 1781 was in full force until 31st December 1784; we cannot sufficiently express our astonishment and concern, that respectable bodies of men should have subscribed their names to allegations, which a little enquiry must have convinced them were totally groundless.

ON the 31st December 1784, the Consolidated Slave-Law of 1781 (as hath been already observed) expired; and it appears, by the Minutes of the House, that on the 20th day of October 1784, a committee was appointed to bring in a bill to revive and continue the same; but so many improvements and amendments were proposed, for giving further protection and security to slaves, particularly in the mode of trial for capital offences, that it was thought adviseable to disperse throughout the island printed copies of the new bill, with the intended alterations, in order that the full sense of the country thereon might be collected, against the next session of Assembly. Much pressing business prevented its passing into a law in 1785 and 1786; and in 1787 the Assembly was dissolved:—but the new Assembly, which met in October 1787, among the first objects of their attention, took the subject into their consideration, and passed the Consolidated Slave-Bill which is now in force; wherein, among other improvements and amendments to the act of 1781, it may be sufficient to enumerate the following:—

By Clause 4th, regulations are made to prevent slaves being deserted in future by their owners, on account of age and infirmity; and, by a subsequent

subsequent clause, the justices and vestry of each town and parish are empowered to lay a tax upon the inhabitants, for providing food, medical care, and attendance, on slaves already deserted by their owners, and who are disabled from labour by sickness, old age, or otherwise. And, in order more effectually to enforce the regulations of former laws, respecting the subsistence and cloathing of slaves, it is enacted, by Clause 6th, That every master, owner, or attorney, shall, under a penalty of fifty pounds, give in to the vestry, on oath, an account of the quantity of land in ground provisions (over and above the negro grounds), for the use of their slaves; or, in case there are not lands proper for the purpose, an account on oath of the means adopted for the maintenance and support of their slaves; and also, under the like penalty, give in an account of the cloathing actually served to each slave.

By Clause 9th, the penalty on persons mutilating or dismembering their slaves is encreased, by adding to the fine of £.100. inflicted by former laws, the punishment of imprisonment, not exceeding twelve months; and, in certain cases, mutilated slaves are to be declared free:—and in all such cases the Court is authorized to direct, that the fine of £.100. be paid over to the justices and vestry of the parish, who, in consideration thereof, are to allow to such slave declared free, ten pounds per annum for maintenance and support, during life. By the same clause the justices and vestry are appointed a council of protection, for the purposes of making full enquiry into the mutilation of slaves, and for prosecuting to effect such owner or owners as may have been guilty thereof. And by Clause 10th it is enacted, That in case any information is made before any justice of the peace, that any slave or slaves is or are mutilated and confined, it shall and may be lawful for such justice of the peace, and he is required, to issue his warrant to the marshal or constable, to bring the slave or slaves before him for inspection. By this regulation the power of concealment is endeavoured to be taken from the owner; for, as it is not required that the information should be on oath, the magistrate is enabled to obtain a view of the fact, on evidence which, in other cases, is, and ought to be, inadmissible.

By Clause 11th, it is enacted, That if any person shall murder any
slave,

slave, whether his own property or not, he shall suffer death for such offence.

AND, in order more effectually to prevent the destruction of negroes, by excessive labour and unreasonable punishments, the surgeon of every plantation, by a subsequent clause is required to give in, on oath, to the justices and vestry, an annual account of the decrease and increase of the slaves of such plantation, with the causes of such decrease, to the best of his knowledge, judgment, and belief.—On this head, the Committee cannot but remark, how tender and cautious every rational manager must necessarily be, in the punishments which he administers, who considers that he has a resident inspector into his conduct; and that the punishment of death may follow an abuse of his authority.

NEITHER does the law extend its protection to the industrious and faithful negro only; provision is made for the support of such fugitives and criminals as are apprehended and lodged in the gaols and work-houses of this island; the daily allowance of good and wholesome food, required by Clause 31st to be given to every slave in confinement, being abundantly liberal, and, as we conceive, unexampled in most other countries, to unhappy persons in similar circumstances.

HAVING thus briefly stated the protection which the laws of this island have provided for our slaves, in the grand circumstance of personal safety; we now proceed to the *second* head, namely to prove, “*that the slave-laws in this island are executed with humanity, mildness, and mercy.*” By the slave-laws here alluded to, we understand the laws, and clauses of laws, which assign penalties and punishments on such offences and transgressions of our slaves as affect the public: and, in order to obtain the fullest information on this head, we have called on the several clerks of the peace of the different precincts and parishes, for returns of all trials of slaves, with the charges, conviction, and punishment severally had thereon, for several years last past, viz. from the 1st of January 1784, to the 30th of September 1788: From these returns, we are enabled to state the following circumstances:—

IN the parishes and precinct of Saint Catherine, Saint John, Saint Dorothy,

Dorothy, and Saint Thomas in the Vale, containing 21,772 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were four only, in the said interval :

IN the parish of Saint Andrew, containing 9,613 slaves, we find only one execution, in the said interval :

IN the parishes and precinct of Saint Thomas in the East and Saint David, containing 23,373 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were ten, in the said interval :

IN the parishes and precinct of St. Mary and Saint George, containing 22,194 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were four, in the said interval :

IN the parish of Saint Ann, containing 13,324 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were two, in the said interval :

IN the parish of Trelawny, containing 19,318 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were seven, in the said interval :

IN the parish of Saint James, containing 18,546 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were three, in the said interval :

IN the parish of Hanover, containing 17,612 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were two, in the said interval :

IN the parish of Westmoreland, containing 16,700 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were four, in the said interval :

IN the parish of Saint Elizabeth, containing 13,280 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were eight, in the said interval :

IN the parishes and precinct of Clarendon and Vere, containing 22,234 slaves, the number of capital convictions and executions were seven, in the said interval :

IN the several towns and parishes of Kingston, Port-Royal, and Portland, containing 12,928 slaves, there do not appear to be any capital convictions within the said period ; but the records of trials in the town of Kingston, previous to 1787, are not to be found.

THE total appears to be, 52 executions in 4 years and 9 months, which is not more than 11 per annum for the last five years, out of 210,894 slaves:—a proof of lenity in the execution of our criminal laws, not to be surpassed, as we conceive, by any nation in Europe. Nothing further, therefore, seems necessary to be added on this head, except the 40th Clause of the present Consolidated Slave-Bill, which directs, that in all cases where the punishment of death is inflicted, the execution shall be performed in a public part of the parish, and with due solemnity; and care shall be taken by the gaoler or deputy-marshal, that the criminal is free from intoxication at the time of his trial, and from thence to, and at the time of, his execution, under the penalty of five pounds: and the mode of such execution is directed to be, hanging by the neck, and no other: It is likewise provided, that where several slaves are capitally convicted for the same offence, one only shall suffer death, except in cases of murder or rebellion.

BUT the Committee cannot quit this subject, without observing, that the number of negroes at this time actually living within this island, is much greater than appears on the tax-rolls, from whence the preceding statement is taken; for, in most parishes of the island, it is customary to exempt persons who have not more than six negroes from the payment of taxes on slaves; whereby many of the negroes (especially in the towns) are not given in to the different vestries, and the returns of a great many other are fraudulently concealed:—we judge, after diligent investigation, that the whole number of negro slaves now actually in the island, are 240,000 at the least.

ON the *third* ground of enquiry, we are to demonstrate, “*That the laws have made provision to grant slaves days of rest, and to prevent their being in want of the necessaries of life.*”—Although we conceive that this assertion has been sufficiently established, by the recital already given of such clauses of our laws as relate to the subsistence of our slaves; yet, as the words, “sufficient time,” in one of the clauses referred to, left a discretionary power in the master, we shall take occasion, in a subsequent part of our report, to shew that the legislature has provided a remedy against any possible abuse of such discretionary authority:

authority: But the further discussion of this subject is deferred, until we treat of the new slave-bill, passed the present session.

ON the *fourth* and *last* ground of our researches, namely, to demonstrate, “ *That the decrease of our slaves does not arise from the causes assigned in the petitions presented to the British House of Commons, but from other causes not imputable to us, and which the people of Great-Britain do not seem to comprehend;*” the Committee, after diligent enquiry and investigation, are of opinion, that the following are the principal causes to which the alledged decrease of our slaves ought justly to be imputed: 1st, *The disproportion between the sexes, in the annual importations from Africa:* 2d, *The loss of new negroes, on or soon after their arrival, from epidemic diseases brought from Africa, or contracted in the voyage.*

RESPECTING the first of these causes, the Committee have examined the most considerable African factors residing in this island, as to the relative numbers of males and females imported and sold annually, for several years past; and it appears from the examination of Robert Hibbert Esquire, a member of this House, that of 16,254 negroes, imported and sold by Messrs. Hibberts & Jackson, between the years 1764 and 1774, 10,149 were males, and 6,145 females: It likewise appears, from the examinations of Messrs. Coppells, Messrs. Rainfords, Messrs. Mures & Dunlop, and Alexandre Lindo, merchant, that out of 32,881 slaves, sold by them collectively, within these seven years last past, the number of males was 20,487, and of females 12,394:—The relative proportion of the whole is, five males to three females.

WE have annexed to this report, extracts from the books of the aforesaid factors as produced by them to this Committee, and from which the above statement is formed:—They are marked, No. 1. No. 2. No. 3. No. 4. and No. 5.

WITH respect to the second cause of such decrease, our enquiries, for the present, have been confined to the number of new negroes that have perished in the harbours of this island, between the time of their having been reported at the custom-house, and the day of sale; all which are included in official books and returns, as negroes actually imported.—From the examination of Mr. Lindo it appears, that

out of 7,873 negroes, consigned to him as factor in the years 1786, 1787, & 1788, and reported at the custom-house, no less than 363 perished in the harbour of Kingston before the day of sale; and if the same proportion of deaths be allowed to the whole of the Africans imported since the conquest of the island to the present time (an allowance which, on many accounts, we conceive to be moderate), the numbers that have thus perished are very considerable. We have thought it necessary to investigate this circumstance, with as much precision as the subject will admit; and having, from the books of the Receiver-general, and other sufficient authorities, procured the most exact account that can be formed, of the imports and exports of negroes into and from this island, from the year 1655 (the time of its conquest) to December 1787, we find the imports to amount to 676,276 negroes; of which, according to the proportion above stated, no less than 31,181 will appear to have died on shipboard after entry, although they stand in the books of office as constituting part of the actual numbers supposed to have been distributed among the planters, and destroyed by neglect, excessive labour, or other maltreatment.

THE Committee are of opinion, that these data lead to important conclusions: For, if the negroes that have perished as above, and the further number of 160,446 (being the total of the exports), making together 191,627, be subtracted from the total of the imports, it will appear, that the full number of slaves which have been introduced and left in the country, from the conquest of the island to December 1787, is reduced to 484,649: Of this number, if a further reduction of two-fifths be made, (which must have happened in any country, and under any system of government), to bring the sexes to an equality, the balance is 290,791. A further reduction must likewise be made, for negroes that have deserted from their owners and left the island; many hundreds, within these few years, having been inveigled over to Cuba, and great numbers have been stolen by privateers in times of war; others are annually carried to Europe, and shipped off the island by their owners, of which no account is preserved, exclusive of such as were executed and transported, in the several great rebellions, and such as have been transported for other offences, by the sentence of the law. It is impossible to ascertain, with precision, the result of these several combined causes; but we conceive,

conceive, that a loss of 13,000 negroes, at the least, may be justly assigned to them since the first settlement of the island, which is not quite an average of a hundred per annum; and which brings the remainder to 277,791.—On the other hand, to the number of 240,000 negroes actually living in the island on the 31st of December, 1787, as before stated, must be added the people called the Maroons, amounting, by the last returns, to about 1300; and also, all the free negroes and people of colour, the latter as being descendants from the black females of the original stock.

It is not easy to ascertain either of these classes with any degree of precision from the tax-rolls, or from the law which requires free negroes to take out certificates, and wear the badge of their freedom, as the law is very seldom complied with, many of the free negroes considering the badge rather as a token of disgrace, than a mark of distinction: We judge, on a loose computation, that the free negroes and people of colour, of all ages and both sexes, cannot amount together to less than 500 in each parish, on an average of the whole; which gives 10,000:—The total is 251,300, which being subtracted from 277,791, leaves 26,491 as the number which would have decreased since the year 1655, under all circumstances, and supposing even that the sexes had been equally distributed.

We shall now point out the principal causes to which this mortality is justly chargeable. It is but too well known to the House, that in the several years 1780, 1781, 1784, 1785, and 1786, it pleased Divine Providence to visit this island with repeated hurricanes, which spread desolation throughout most parts of the island; but the parishes which suffered more remarkably than the rest, were those of Westmoreland, Hanover, Saint James, Trelawny, Portland, and Saint Thomas in the East. By these destructive visitations, the plantain-walks, which furnish the chief article of support to the negroes, were generally rooted up, and the intense droughts which followed, destroyed those different species of ground-provisions which the hurricanes had not reached. The storms of 1780 and 1781 happening during the time of war, no foreign supplies, except a trifling assistance from prize-vessels, could be obtained on any terms, and a famine ensued in the leeward parts of the island, which destroyed many thousand negroes. After the storm of the 30th July 1784, the Lieutenant-Governor, by the advice of his Council, published a proclamation,

mation, dated the 7th of August, permitting the free importation of provisions and lumber in foreign bottoms, for four months from that period. As this was much too short a time, to give sufficient notice, and obtain all the supplies that were necessary, the small quantities of flour, rice, and other provisions, which were imported in consequence of the proclamation, soon rose to so exorbitant a price, as to induce the Assembly, on the 9th of November following, to present an address to the Lieutenant-Governor, requesting him to prolong the term until the latter end of March 1785; observing, that it was impossible for the natural productions of the country to come to such maturity as to be wholesome food, before that time. The term of four months not being expired when this address was presented, the Lieutenant-Governor declined to comply therewith; but, on the 1st of December following, the House represented, that a prolongation of the term was then absolutely necessary: They observe, that, persuaded of the reluctance with which His Honour would be brought to deviate from regulations which he felt himself bound to observe, it would give them much concern to address him on the same occasion a second time, were they not convinced that it was in a case of such extreme necessity as to justify such a deviation. Accordingly, the Lieutenant-Governor, by the advice of His Majesty's Council, directed, that the time formerly limited should be extended to the 31st of January then next ensuing (1785): but, at the same time, he informed the House, that he was not at liberty to deviate any longer from the regulations which had been established in Great-Britain.

FROM the 31st of January 1785, therefore, the ports continued shut, and the sufferings of the poor negroes, in consequence thereof, for some months afterwards, were extreme: Providentially, the seasons became more favourable about May, and considerable quantities of corn and ground-provisions were gathered in by the month of August, when the fourth storm happened, and the Lieutenant-Governor immediately shut the ports against the exportation of any of our provisions to the French and Spanish islands, which were supposed to have suffered more than ourselves; but not thinking himself at liberty to permit the importation of provisions in American vessels, the productions of the country were soon exhausted, and the usual attendants of scanty and unwholesome diet, dropies, and epidemic dysenteries, were

were again dreadfully prevalent in the spring and summer of 1786, and proved fatal to great numbers of the negroes, in all parts of the country.

ON the 20th of October in that year, happened the fifth dreadful hurricane, which again laid waste the leeward parishes, and completed the tragedy. We decline to enlarge on the consequences which followed, lest we may appear to exaggerate; but having endeavoured to compute, with as much accuracy as the subject will admit, the number of our slaves whose destruction may be fairly attributed to these repeated calamities, and the unfortunate measure of interdicting foreign supplies, and for this purpose compared the imports and returns of negroes for the last seven years, with those of seven years preceding, we hesitate not, after every allowance for adventitious causes, to fix the whole at 15,000: This number we firmly believe to have perished of famine, or of diseases contracted by scanty and unwholesome diet, between the latter end of 1780 and the beginning of 1787.

BUT the most general and prevailing causes of the decrease of our slaves, and which are abundantly sufficient to account for the loss which is not already accounted for, are palpable to every observer: They are undoubtedly, 1st, *The great proportion of deaths that happen among negroes newly imported*, (exclusively of the mortality which has been stated to occur before landing); and, 2dly, *The loss which prevails among the negro infants that are born in the country*:—Of the latter, it is believed that one-fourth part perish within fourteen days of the birth; but we can form no precise estimate of the proportionate loss of new negroes, inasmuch as the diseases with which many of them are afflicted, put on various appearances, and are of a tedious and lingering nature, and may therefore be such as are common both to the new negroes and the old: Nevertheless, in order to collect the best information in our power, on subjects so interesting to the community, we have thought it necessary to take the examinations thereon, of some gentlemen who are eminent in the knowledge and practice of physic and surgery:—To these examinations (which are marked No. 6. No. 7. and No. 8.) the Committee refer; and are happy to observe, that it is extremely probable, the regulating act lately passed by the British Parliament, when further matured, will greatly contribute to
lessen

lessen in future that dreadful mortality, which there has been too much cause to lament, as well in the voyages from Africa, as among the negroes after their arrival in the West-Indies. With such happy consequences, resulting from the beneficial provisions of the said act of the British Parliament, and the encouragement which has been given by a bill passed in this island this present session, to the overseers of our plantations, to induce them to take all possible care of the new-born infants, (as will hereafter be more particularly mentioned), the Committee have no reason to suppose that the encrease of our negroes by generation (from the time that the sexes shall become nearly equal in point of number) will fall short of the natural encrease which occurs among the labouring poor of Great-Britain.

THE Committee might here conclude their report; but having referred to a new bill, which has passed the House this present session, for giving further protection and security to our slaves, and for altering the mode of trial of such as shall be charged with capital offences, we think ourselves called upon, in justice to the House, to subjoin an abridgment of the principal clauses and provisions contained therein.

* THE distinguishing feature of this bill, as the title imports, is the alteration

* As a considerable alteration has been made in the new Consolidated Act, in the clause to which the abovementioned paragraph relates, Mr. Fuller has thought it proper to communicate to the public the following letter from the Committee of Correspondence, which he received by the Greyhound packet, at the same time that he received the said act.

S I R,

Spanish Town, Jamaica, 11th December, 1788.

HEREWITH you will receive a copy of our new Consolidated Slave Act, which received the Governor's assent on Saturday the sixth instant. It is necessary that His Majesty's ministers should be apprized of a considerable alteration made therein since the report of the House on the subject of the slave trade, transmitted to you by the last packet. In that report it was stated, that the mode of trial of our slaves was by referring all capital cases to the jurisdiction of the courts of quarter-session; by which regulation, it was urged, that the offender would have the security both of a grand, and petty jury; and a clause to this effect constituted part of the bill when it passed the Assembly. To this regulation the Council objected, conceiving that the mode of trial thus proposed, approximated too nearly to the mode of trying white persons, and that local policy required a distinction. A free conference was held on this subject, which lasted two days, and the House was at length induced to agree to the alterations in the jurisdiction as they now stand, being apprehensive

alteration in the mode of trials of our slaves, by referring all capital offences to the jurisdiction of the courts of quarter-session, which are held every three months in the several precincts and parishes of the island. By this regulation, the offender will have the security, both of a grand and petit jury; and even the suspicion of partiality or undue influence will be obviated. It is further enacted, That no less than three justices, one of whom to be of the Quorum, shall constitute a court at the trial of slaves at the quarter-sessions; and that if the jury apply to the court, to suspend the execution of the sentence, until the pleasure of the Commander in Chief is known, the court shall be obliged to suspend the same for thirty days.

PETTY offences, for which no punishment exceeding fifty lashes and six months confinement to hard labour, is assigned, are cognizable before two justices of the peace; and it is expressly declared, that neither the courts of quarter-session, nor the justices, shall have power to order any slave to be mutilated or maimed, for any offence whatsoever.

By another clause, encouragement is given to all masters and mistresses, owners, or, in their absence, overseers of slaves, as much as in them lies, to endeavour the instruction of their slaves in the principles of the Christian religion, thereby to facilitate their conversion, and fit them for baptism; and, as soon as conveniently they can, they shall cause to be baptised all such as they can make sensible of a Deity, and the Christian faith.

ANOTHER very important object of this bill is the correction of two material errors which had been accidentally made in the consolidated slave-bill of last year: The words, "*without benefit of clergy*," in the

henfitive that the Bill would otherwise be lost. At the same time we have the pleasure to observe, that the various other regulations for the security and protection of our slaves remain as stated in the said report; and are now confirmed into a law.

We are, Sir, your most obedient Servants.

Stephen Fuller, Esq.

Signed by nine Members of the Committee.

N. B. By the new Consolidated Law, capital offences are to be tried by three justices, and nine jurors taken from the panel returned to the court of quarter-sessions.

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clause which assigns the punishment of death to persons wantonly killing a negro or other slave, having been undesignedly omitted—these are now restored:—And another clause in the said consolidated slave-bill, which inflicted punishments on persons wantonly and cruelly beating slaves, and imprisoning them without sufficient support, having been interpreted not to extend to such slaves as were the property of the offender, has been amended, and the protection which it affords is now extended to all slaves, without distinction.

FURTHER, in the view of restraining arbitrary punishments, it is, by the said bill, enacted, That no slave on any plantation or settlement, or in any of the workhouses or gaols in this island, shall receive more than ten lashes at one time, and for one offence, unless the owner, attorney, guardian, executor, administrator, or overseer of such plantation or settlement, or supervisor of such workhouse, or keeper of such gaol, shall be present; and no such owner, attorney, guardian, executor, administrator, or overseer, supervisor, or gaol-keeper, shall, on any account, punish a slave with more than thirty-nine lashes, at one time, and for one offence, under the penalty of five pounds for every offence, to be recovered against the person directing or permitting such punishment.

ANOTHER object of this bill (as hath been already observed) is to secure to our slaves days of rest, and sufficient time to cultivate their grounds, in order to prevent their being in want of the necessaries of life: For which purpose, after reciting, that although it hath been customary with the planters in this island to allow their slaves one day in every fortnight (exclusive of Sundays); yet this indulgence not being compulsory, it is enacted by the said bill, that the slaves belonging to, or employed on, every plantation or settlement, shall, over and above the usual holidays allowed them at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, be allowed one day in every fortnight, to cultivate their own provision-grounds (exclusive of Sundays), except during the time of crop, under the penalty of ten pounds, to be recovered against the overseer, or other person having the care of such slaves. And,

LASTLY, with intention to prevent, as far as possible, the great mortality which has been stated to prevail among the new-born negro infants, it is also enacted, That, in case it shall appear, to the satisfaction

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fraction of the justices and vestry of each parish, from the returns required to be made annually, there has been a natural encrease in the number of slaves on any such plantation, pen, or other settlement, the overseer shall be entitled to receive from the owner or proprietor of such plantation, pen, or other settlement, the sum of twenty shillings for every slave born on such plantation, pen, or other settlement, and which shall be then living, at the time of giving in such annual returns; and the owner or proprietor of such plantation, pen, or other settlement, shall have a deduction, from the first of his or her public taxes that shall become due, of the sum so paid to the overseer, on producing a certificate of the justices and vestry of such encrease, and a receipt of the overseer for the sum so paid.

YOUR Committee cannot conclude without observing, that if, notwithstanding all that we have urged in our own vindication, from the groundless charges that have been made on our humanity in the treatment of slaves, it shall be determined by the British Parliament to abolish the African trade altogether (a measure which must, in the result, ruin the sugar islands) we trust in the justice of the British nation, that we shall not be made the sacrifice on this occasion, but that the Legislature will give us such a compensation, as the consequent diminution in the value of our properties, and their ultimate destruction, shall entitle us to expect. We have the greater reason to indulge this expectation, from the justice that has been done to the late proprietors of Florida, and also to such of the African merchants as would be sufferers by the late regulations.

A P P E N D I X.

No. 1.

Account of Negroes imported from Africa, sold by Hibberts and Jackson, from the year 1764 to 1774.

<i>Vessels.</i>	<i>Imported from.</i>	<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
1764. Per snow Oswego,	Anamaboe,	173	100	273
Per snow Ford,	Bonny,	127	130	257
Per ship Captain,	Anamaboe,	189	93	282
Per ship Black Prince,	Ditto,	96	50	146
Per ship Tryall,	Old Calabar,	295	141	436
Per ship Jupiter,	Ditto,	146	81	227
Per ship Anamaboe,	Anamaboe,	263	111	374
Per ship Cato,	Calabar,	294	164	458
Per ship Ingram,	Anamaboe,	205	90	295
Per ship Society,	Whydah,	168	140	308
Per ship Dolphin,	Anamaboe,	250	106	356
Per ship Amelia,	Calabar,	224	120	344
1765. Per ship Quebec,	Anamaboe,	206	105	311
Per ship Sandwich,	Old Calabar,	197	118	315
Per brigantine Sam,	Angola,	149	92	241
Per snow Plumper,	Anamaboe,	187	97	284
Per ship Marlborough,	Ditto,	184	83	267
Per ship Cornwall,	Angola,	232	76	308
Per ship Rumbold,	Bonny,	271	137	408
Per ship King David,	Calabar,	188	130	318
1766. Per ship Indian Queen,	Ditto,	208	175	383
Per ship Esther,	Anamaboe,	212	129	341
Per ship Ingram,	Ditto,	195	86	281
Per brigantine Thomas,	Angola,	183	90	273
Per ship Captain,	Windward Coast,	153	75	228
Per ship Knight,	Whydah,	130	158	288
Per ship Jenny,	Ditto,	89	107	196
1767. Per ship Society,	Ditto,	173	113	286
				1767.

		Males.	Females.	Total.
1767. Per snow Peggy,	Benin,	113	101	214
1768. Per ship Society	Windward Coast,	236	115	351
1769. Per ship Blossom,	Ditto,	131	62	193
Per snow Peggy,	Benin,	113	101	214
Per ship Ann,	Ditto,	134	142	276
Per snow Hannah,	Windward Coast,	184	78	262
Per ship King David,	Calabar,	98	59	157
Per ship Lancashire } Witch,	Windward Coast,	155	60	215
Per brig William,	Ditto,	96	64	160
Per ship Nancy,	Anamaboe,	153	87	240
1770. Per ship Corfican Hero,	Windward Coast,	205	89	294
Per ship Ingram,	Ditto,	184	95	279
Per ship Benin,	Benin,	146	189	335
Per ship Unity,	Anamaboe,	186	221	407
Per ship Society,	Ditto,	150	128	278
Per ship Indian Queen,	Calabar,	81	97	178
Per snow Hannah,	Anamaboe,	201	94	295
1771. Per ship Jamaica,	Windward Coast,	108	43	151
1772. Per snow Africa,	Anamaboe,	164	81	245
Per ship Ingram,	Ditto,	178	96	274
Per snow Hannah,	Ditto,	160	72	232
1773. Per brig Will,	Papaw,	69	62	131
Per brig Bee,	Anamaboe,	59	33	92
1774. Per brig Lively,	Gambia,	74	21	95
Per ship Jenny,	Calabar,	99	84	183
Per snow Robert,	Windward Coast,	56	73	129
Per snow Woortman,	Anamaboe,	123	75	203
Per snow Marcia,	Calabar,	83	83	166
Per ship Marquis } Rockingham,	Anamaboe,	210	62	272
Per snow Grace,	Bonny,	151	84	235
Per ship Corfican Hero,	Anamaboe,	222	100	322
Per ship Russell,	Ditto,	182	93	275
Per ship Hawke,	Windward Coast,	253	164	417

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*The above is a true Extract from the Books
of Hibberts and Jackson,*

ROBERT HIBBERT.

No. 2.

No. 2.

Account of Negroes imported from Africa, and sold by
Messrs. Coppells.

			Males.	Females.
1782, November.	Per ship Molly,	Gold Coast,	450	161
	Per ship William,	Calabar,	179	102
1783, May.	Per ship Eagle,	Gold Coast,	301	156
July.	Per ship Tartar,	Angola,	362	166
August.	Per ship George,	Gold Coast,	437	170
December.	Per ship St. Leger,	Angola,	365	179
1784, March.	Per ship Liverpool,	Bonny,	219	152
April.	Per ship Tom,	Gold Coast,	330	155
	Per ship William,	Old Calabar,	187	100
June.	Per ship Molly,	Gold Coast,	334	188
	Per ship Brooks,	Ditto,	364	216
	Per ship Garnet,	Ditto,	197	122
August.	Per ship Rose,	Bonny,	226	143
September.	Per ship Mungo,	Gold Coast,	231	130
November.	Per ship Tartar,	Bonny,	230	191
	Per ship George,	Ditto,	302	198
December.	Per ship Highfield,	Gold Coast,	205	146
	Per ship Viper,	Ditto,	342	177
1785, February.	Per ship Benedict,	Calabar,	95	125
	Per ship Liverpool,	Bonny,	277	214
March.	Per ship Elizabeth,	Gold Coast,	375	198
1787, July.	Per ship Elizabeth,	Ditto,	374	165
1788, January.	Per ship Betty,	Whydaw,	259	185
			6641	3739

True Extract from the Books of the different Firms,

THO. ASPINALL.

No. 3.

Account of Negroes imported from Africa, and sold by
Messrs. Rainfords.

			Males.	Females.
1779.	Per ship Rumbold,	from Anamaboe,	179	79
	Per ship Rumbold's Prize,	Ditto,	180	111
1780.	Per ship Rumbold,	Ditto,	358	127
1782.	Per ship Vulture,	Bonny,	304	221
	Per ship Bellona,	Whydah,	243	168
1783.	Per ship Gregson,	Bonny,	392	261
1784.	Per ship Edwards,	Old Calabar,	267	135
	Per ship Jane,	Bonny,	247	201
	Per ship Stag,	Ditto,	168	136
	Per ship Nancy,	Ditto,	292	172
	Per ship Golden Age,	Whydah,	249	254
1785.	Per ship Vulture,	Bonny,	352	325
	Per ship Jane,	Ditto,	285	248
	Per ship Clementina,	Ditto,	204	187
	Per ship Molly,	Anamaboe,	346	177
	Per ship Gregson,	Bonny,	175	141
	Per brig Iris,	Anamaboe,	219	76
1786.	Per ship Vale,	Ditto,	231	122
1787.	Per ship Gregson,	Bonny,	194	158
	Per ship Tom,	Benin,	153	127
1788.	Per ship King Pepple,	Bonny,	216	272
			5254	3698

*The above is a List of sundry Cargoes of Negroes sold
by Rainford, Blundell, and Rainford.*

SAM. RAINFORD.

No. 4.

No. 4.

Account of Negroes imported from Africa, and sold from
1781 to 1786, by Mures and Dunlop.

	<i>Vessels.</i>	<i>Commanders.</i>	<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>
1781.	Atalanta	James Charles,	279	129
	Camden,	Thomas King,	345	184
1782.	Rumbold,	Thomas Molineux,	311	185
	Mars,	Robert Paterfon,	207	68
1783.	Neptune,	Thomas Jolly,	243	178
	Trelawny,	William Thoburn,	312	134
1784.	Africa,	James Charles,	342	193
	Bellona,	Francis Holland,	243	200
	Eliott,	Clemetson,	444	280
1785.	Mermaid,	Renolds,	243	215
	Albion,	John Muir,	254	117
	Old England,	John Gellin,	111	54
1786.	Fenton,	John Harrifon,	110	64
	Trelawny,	William Thoburn,	249	100
	Mungo,	Silus Jenkins,	35	22
	Molly,	Jofias Hort,	121	67
			3849	2190

MURES & DUNLOP.

MEMORANDUM of SLAVES configned to, and sold by, ALEXANDRE LINDO,
from 9th January, 1786, to 19th August, 1788.

	VESSELS NAMES.	OWNERS.	Register Tonnage.	When sold.	Slaves imported.	Do. sold.	Sold for island use.	Sold for exportation.	Males.	Females.	Above 4 feet 4 in.	Under 4 feet 4 in.	From whence.
1786.				1786.									
Feb. 12.	Ship Brooks,	Joseph Brooks & Co.	300	9th Jan.	620	608	183	425	431	177	525	83	Anamaboe
April 14.	Snow John,	Camden & Calvert.	120	22d Feb.	155	154	13	141	106	45	93	61	Gaboon
14.	Ship President,	Gill, Heater, & Co.	300	2d March.	370	328	105	223	175	153	236	42	Calabar
28.	Ship Lady Penrhyn,	Ellis & Robert Bents,	200	16th Do.	275	236	89	147	120	116	187	49	New Calabar
28.	Ship African,	Parke & Heywood,	350	28th Do.	582	582	247	335	380	194	456	126	Anamaboe
*May 30.	Ship Elliott,	Francis Ingram & Co.	240	21st April.	891	891	229	662	575	316	813	78	Whydow
Dec. 22.	Ship Fly,	Camden & Calvert,	150	18th Dec.	315	314	162	152	224	90	274	40	Anamaboe
1787.				1787.									
Feb. 16.	Ship Mentor,	C. & R. Pulles,	150	1st Jan.	204	197	51	146	126	71	169	28	Gambia
April 2.	Ship Vulture,	William Boats & Co.	300	12th Feb.	646	599	306	283	382	207	474	115	New Calabar
2.	Ship Venus,	Camden & Calvert,	140	26th Do.	296	296	106	190	195	101	238	58	Anamaboe
9.	Snow John,	Ditto,	120	14th March.	180	180	0	180	131	49	110	70	Ditto
July 14.	Ship Antonetta,	Ditto,	300	14th June.	290	287	241	46	201	86	265	22	Ditto
14	Ship Ingram,	Francis Ingram & Co.	240	20th Do.	512	512	220	292	271	241	453	59	Whydow
1788.													
Jan. 15.	Ship Preston,	Tho. & Wm. Earle & Co.	100	13th Nov.	195	186	100	86	112	74	131	55	Calabar
April 17.	Ship Elliott,	Francis Ingram & Co.	260	1788. Feb. 4.	520	373	185	188	227	146	331	42	Whydow
March 7.	Ship African Queen,	James Margetson,	402	20th Do.	466	451	212	239	194	257	277	174	New Calabar
May 10.	Ship Blayds,	Francis Ingram & Co.	300	2d April.	492	470	141	329	330	140	425	45	Whydow
July 29.	Ship Galscoyne,	J. & J. Gregson & Co.	350	10th July.	490	489	36	453	280	209	304	185	Calabar
Aug. 2.	Ship Commerce,	Camden & Calvert,	120	21st Do.	161	159	25	134	108	51	108	51	Gambia
19.	Ship Mentor,	William Lyttelton,	150	7th August.	213	208	79	129	167	41	183	25	Ditto
			4592		7873	7510	2730	4780	4743	2767	6052	1458	

ALEXANDRE LINDO.

The Examination of James Chisholme, Esquire, of the
Parish of Clarendon, formerly a Member of this House.

Saith, **T**HAT he studied physick at Edinburgh; hath practised in this island upwards of twenty years; and that, during fourteen years of the time, he hath had the care of 4000 negroes, and upwards.

Saith, That a great proportion of negro infants perish between the fifth and fourteenth days after their birth; he believes nearly one-fourth part of all that are born. The species of tetanus by which so many negro children are destroyed, is described by medical writers under the name of *opisthotonus*, or that kind of spasm in which the muscles that bend the spine backwards, with those of the lower jaw only, are affected:—It is commonly ascribed to one of the three following causes: 1st, An affection of the bowels, arising from the *meconium* or fœces (lodged there before birth) not being sufficiently purged off: 2^{dly}, From obstructed perspiration: 3^{dly}, From the irritation occasioned by the improper treatment of the sore remaining after the umbilical cord has dropped off. He is of opinion, it seldom or never proceeds from the *first* cause; for it is a very common custom with the midwives, to give the children a good deal of oil and sugar soon after they are born, by which they are much purged:—notwithstanding, children so treated are frequently attacked with this complaint; besides, bowel complaints, whether in children or adults, though they frequently occasion convulsions, and sometimes palsy, yet he believes they never occasion fixed spasm. In regard to the *second* cause, although he makes no doubt it may occasion this complaint in children, as he has certainly seen it do in adults, yet he is inclined to think it seldom does: His reasons are, that when this complaint takes place in adults, from obstructed perspiration, it generally runs out to a great length, and is not generally fatal; whereas the complaint in the infants we are now treating of, always terminates in a few days, and is almost universally fatal:—further, this complaint in infants constantly makes its appearance between the fifth and fourteenth day after birth; but children are not more subject to colds at that, than at any other period. The *third* cause ap-
pears

pears generally, if not in every instance, to occasion this disorder:— it is universally known, that whatever vellicates or irritates the minute branches of nerves, whether by puncture, laceration, burning, or friction on a raw place, will in tropical climates occasion this complaint even in adults, but much more readily in the tender bodies of infants; we also know, that in negro children, after the umbilical cord has fallen off, the raw part, after being slightly covered with lint or rag, is bound round with a coarse cloth, and that in a few hours is soaked in the child's urine; in which state it is suffered to remain, producing a degree of irritation much more than sufficient to produce this spasm. When it is considered that this complaint takes place between the fifth and fourteenth day only, it must be allowed to be excited by some cause that is also confined to the same period; but the cause just mentioned is the only one that occurs at no other period in life, as far as we know.

Saith, That if he is right in his theory, respecting the cause of this complaint, it will be supposed that the remedy is obvious, as it will be only directing a greater attention to be paid to the dressing and cleanliness of the infant during the period above alluded to: But, simple as this may appear in theory, those who are much conversant with negroes, will be aware of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of putting it in practice, in a degree sufficient to answer the purpose: For, such is the ignorance, obstinacy, and inattention of negroes; so little regard have they for each other, and so averse are they to executing the directions of white people, when repugnant to their own prejudices, that he believes the evil can never be wholly remedied, while we are obliged to employ negroes as nurses.

Being asked, Whether he hath not observed a great mortality among negroes newly imported, and to what cause or causes he imputes the same?

Saith, That a very great number of newly-imported negroes are lost by diseases, the predisposing causes of which they bring to this country along with them: Most new negroes, when first landed, are much subject to putrid complaints, arising from a scorbutic habit contracted during the voyage, which frequently manifests itself soon after they are landed, in putrid dysenteries, or by foul ulcers, tending strongly to mortification. Many negroes, while aboard, are affected with the most virulent venereal complaints; others have the yaws; some, ma-

lignant ulcers; all of which, when the day of sale draws near, are, by the management of the ship's surgeon, dried up, and the morbid matter repelled into the system; so that the surface of the skin shall appear clean and smooth for a time, but which afterwards creates the most dreadful complaints, too frequently baffling all attempts to cure.

(Signed)

J.A. CHISHOLME.

No. 7.

The Examination of Adam Anderson, of the Parish of St. Ann, Practitioner in Physic and Surgery.

Saith, **T**HAT he had the rudiments of physic and surgery in Aberdeen; that he afterwards studied at Edinburgh, Leyden, and London, and has practised physic in this island upwards of 28 years; and formerly, with a partner, had the physical care of near 4000 slaves.

Saith, He is of opinion that one-fourth part of the negro infants perish before the ninth day from the birth, of the tetanus or locked-jaw; a disorder which the negroes call the jaw-fall; and that its affecting infants of that age, is peculiar to the West-Indies: That he is of opinion one-tenth part of the white infants perish in the same manner.

Saith, That he made enquiry, when in Great Britain about four years ago, and could hear of no such disorder: That he is warranted to say it is peculiar to the West-Indies, from a late publication of the famous Doctor Cullen of Edinburgh; who, in treating of the locked-jaw in infants, says, "he speaks only from information, for he never met with it in the course of his practice."

Saith, That he has made enquiry amongst the most sensible negro women, and that he never could learn the disorder was known in Africa.

Saith, That he imputes the cause to the irritation of a putrid matter,

ter, generated about the umbilicus or navel during the separation of the chord; which generally happens from the fifth to the seventh day: That the disorder may likewise proceed from cold, or the meconium not being properly carried off: But these causes occur very seldom:— That the first symptom is an uneasiness in the infant, and refusal of the breast; in the course of a few hours the jaw closes, a general spasm takes place, and death commonly ensues in the course of twenty-four hours: That immediately before death, a general relaxation comes on, and the lower jaw falls on the breast; thence called jaw-fallen by the negroes.

Saith, That he does not believe the disorder, in general, is owing to any improper mode of treatment of the infant, as he has often known it occur notwithstanding the greatest care; and that, from the rapidity of the disorder, and the tender age of the patient, he knows of no certain remedy that succeeded, either from the application of opiates, or any other medicine, once in twenty times: That it occurs in high and healthy situations as well as in low ones, in mountainous districts as well as those near the sea side.

Saith, That great losses are sustained in the encrease of negroes, from the length of time the negro women continue their children at the breast, seldom less than two years, and many of them more: That there is no remedying this evil, without great discontent; as the mother, during the time of her being a nurse, is commonly allowed an hour in turning out to labour, later than the other negroes; and returning an hour earlier from labour.

Saith, He is of opinion, that many negro children die of that disorder peculiar to the Africans, called the yaws, particularly if they are infected during the first year; which the mothers in general attempt to effect, on purpose to excuse themselves from labour.

Saith, He is of opinion, notwithstanding those inconveniences already enumerated, there is very considerable encrease of negroes on the properties of this island, particularly in the parish where he resides.

Saith, That the losses sustained in seasoning newly-imported negroes, are chiefly owing to the many disorders they bring with them, either from Africa, or contracted on board ship; such as, venereals, the yaws, and old habitual ulcers.

Saith, The number of obstinate cases he has met with, induced him
to

to enquire of surgeons that had been in that trade, respecting the mode of treatment during the voyage ; and that he has been informed, it was customary to suppress venereals by astringent injections ; to cause the yaws and ulcers to disappear by ischuretic washes ; and on the day of sale, or a few days before, to hide the scars with blacking and palm-oil : That the epidemic dysentery is frequent on board ship ; and though the surgeons have a method of concealing it on the day of sale, in some measure, by astringents, yet it frequently breaks out after the negroes have landed, with double fury : Of which he remembers the following remarkable instance in Colin Campbell, of Saint Ann's, having bought thirty negroes in Kingston ; an epidemic dysentery broke out among them soon after their arrival at the plantation, of which twenty-four of them died ; the disorder was communicated to the rest of the negroes on the plantation, and several of them likewise fell a sacrifice to it.

(Signed) ADAM ANDERSON.

No. 8.

The Examination of John Quier, of the Parish of St. John,
Practitioner in Physic and Surgery.

Saith, **T**HAT he studied surgery in London, and physic at Leyden ; and served His Majesty as an assistant surgeon in the military hospitals, in the former war in Germany : That he has practised in this island for upwards of twenty-one years : That for the greater part of that time, he has had from 4000 to 5000 slaves constantly under his care, in the parishes of St. John and St. Thomas in the Vale, and of late years in the parish of Clarendon.

I

Saith,

Saith, That the local circumstances, attending difference of situation in this island, occasion so great a diversity in the diseases to which the inhabitants of different parts of this country are subject, that very few observations thereon will be found to be universally true: That he has not in general observed any very great mortality amongst negro infants soon after their birth, in that part of the country where he practises, nor any peculiar disease to which they are more subject than any other children would be under the same circumstances; namely: 1st, The known want of cleanliness, arising from the obstinate attachment of negro women to their own old customs, particularly to one so evidently mischievous, in a warm climate, as that of not shifting the child's cloaths for the first three days after its birth; and sometimes from the deficiency of linen, and other necessaries proper for a new-born infant: 2^{dly}, The nature of their habitations; sometimes suffocating with heat and smoke; at others, when the fire subsides, especially by night, admitting the cold damp air through innumerable crevices and holes of the walls, which are seldom kept in proper repair; which sudden transition from heat to cold, by occasioning peripneumonic fevers, he thinks to be the most general cause of the death of new-born negro infants in that part of the country where he practises: And lastly, the injudicious custom of suckling a new-born child, for the first week after its birth, or longer, with the milk of a woman who often has a child at her breast a year old, or perhaps older.

Saith, That, in his opinion, difficult labours happen as frequently amongst negro women here, as amongst the females of the labouring poor in England; but that he has not observed that a greater proportion of the infants of the former perish in the delivery than of the latter.

Saith, That he does not conceive the tetanus, or locked-jaw, to be a disease common to infants in the part where he practises; that he apprehends there may be reason to suppose that a symptom which generally attends approaching death, from whatever cause it may proceed in children; viz. a paralysis of the muscles of the lower jaw, has been frequently mistaken, by people unacquainted with medicine, for the tetanus; as he has often observed the same name to be given in common discourse to both those affections, though of so very different a nature.

Saith, That the negro women, whether slaves or free, do not, in his opinion,

opinion, breed so frequently, as the women amongst the labouring poor in Great Britain: that he ascribes this chiefly to the promiscuous intercourse, which the greater number of negro women indulge themselves in with the other sex. That he believes the abortions, which he thinks to be rather frequent amongst them, to be ascribable to the same cause: That he has not met with any cases of abortion, which he could fairly impute to ill usage or excessive labour: That moderate labour is beneficial to pregnant women, as being the best means of preserving general health.

Saith, That the custom of carrying young children into the field, in the manner, and with the precautions it is now practised, is by no means hurtful to the infants.

Saith, That he believes a greater number of children under the age of ten years, die here, than in England: That there are some disorders to which children are more liable than adults: that the yaws, a disease originally African, occasions numbers of them to perish: that worm complaints are more frequent here than in England: and that the same epidemical diseases, which are incident to children in Europe, viz. the small-pox, measles, and whooping-cough, are equally common to negro children here, and in a severer degree: Moreover that, from the frequent shifting of the connexion between the sexes, many children are lost through neglect and the want of maternal affection, which the mothers seldom retain for their offspring by a former husband.

Saith, That, in his opinion, any attempt to restrain this licentious intercourse between the sexes, amongst the slaves in this island, in the present state of their notions of right and wrong, by introducing the marriage ceremony amongst them, would be utterly impracticable, and perhaps of dangerous consequence; as these people are universally known to claim a right of disposing of themselves in this respect, according to their own will and pleasure, without any controul from their masters.

Saith, That a greater proportion of those called new negroes die, than of those that are seasoned to the country: That, in his opinion, this is often occasioned, in those recently imported, by the bad habit of body these people have contracted from long confinement, bad food, and improper treatment in the voyage: That within these last twenty years, the treatment of new negroes in this island has been greatly altered
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for the better: That those people are now, in general, treated with great humanity and tenderness, both before and after they are become seasoned to the country; and that he does not conceive the great mortality amongst them, commonly to arise from want of food, or from severe labour.

(Signed) J. QUIER.



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY.

Jovis, 13^o die Novembris, 1788.

THE House, according to order, resolved itself into a committee of the whole House, to enquire into, and take further into consideration, the state of the island :

Mr. Speaker left the chair :

Mr. Irving took the chair of the committee :

Mr. Speaker resumed the chair :

Mr. Irving, from the committee, reported five resolutions ; which he read in his place, and delivered in at the table ; where being again severally read by the Clerk, were agreed unto by the House, and are as follow : —

“ 1. RESOLVED, *Nem. con.* That it be recommended to the House, to agree to the report made by the chairman of the committee appointed to examine into, and report to the House, the various allegations and charges which, by the Agent's letters, and the minutes of the House of Commons of Great Britain, appear to be contained in a great number of petitions, presented to that Honourable House, on the subject of the Slave-Trade, and the treatment of the negroes in this and the rest of His Majesty's sugar colonies ; to report the proceedings and resolutions of the British Parliament thereon ; and further to consider whether it may be proper for this House to adopt any, and what, measures, on this important occasion.

“ 2. RESOLVED, *Nem. con.* That it be recommended to the House, to send a message to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, to desire
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he will be pleased to transmit a copy of the said report, by the packet, to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State, that the same may be laid before His Majesty in Council.

“ 3. RESOLVED, *Nem. con.* That it be recommended to the House, to direct the Committee of Correspondence to transmit a copy of the said report, together with a copy of the former report, to the Agent; with directions, that he do cause the said two reports to be printed, and a copy thereof to be delivered to each Peer of Parliament, and to each of the Members of the House of Commons, and to the several Corporations who have presented petitions to Parliament, praying for an abolition of the Slave-Trade;—and that he likewise cause the same to be published throughout the kingdom.

“ 4. RESOLVED, *Nem. con.* That it be recommended to the House, to direct the two several reports on the slave-trade to be immediately printed, and that ten copies thereof be delivered to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, and to each Member of the Council and Assembly; and that this, or any future Assembly, will make good the expence thereof.”

RESOLVED, *Nem. con.* That the thanks of this House be given, by Mr. Speaker, to Bryan Edwards, Esquire, in his place, for the assiduity and industry he has exerted in procuring information, and the judgment and ability displayed in arranging the several matters contained in the two reports of the committee on the slave-trade, in refutation of the groundless aspersions and charges exhibited against the inhabitants of this island, in the treatment of their slaves.

BY THE HOUSE,

GEORGE FRENCH, Cl. Ass.

True Copy,

GEO. FRENCH, Cl. to the Assembly.



